

Das Kuchenhaus Bakery: A Growing Business

The Zimbleman family's dream to launch a bakery became a reality in 2008. The Das Kuchenhaus Bakery, located on Main Street in Bridger, creates fresh artisan bread and European pastries from family recipes that have been handed down through generations. Although customers dropped into the bakery from many parts of Montana and Wyoming to purchase the stollen, krumkake, strudel, and other tasty treats, Deb and Tim Zimbleman soon realized that they needed to reach a larger audience and expand the distribution network for their fine products.

Understanding their need for a marketing plan and materials, the **Beartooth RC&D Food and Agricultural Development Center** in Joliet assisted Das Kuchenhaus with a successful USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant. The \$8,000 grant was used to hire CTA Design, of Billings, to develop a logo, signage and website for the business. The result was a well-crafted plan for expanding the business through new products and targeted marketing efforts.



Beartooth RC&D Food and Ag Development Center staff also directed the Zimblemans to the Business Expansion and Retention program where they were able to gain access to an accounting professional.

In 2012, the Beartooth Center assisted Das Kuchenhaus with a Montana Department of Agriculture Growth Through Agriculture \$1,500 mini-grant for packaging design for a new product, the Trailblazer energy bar.

The bakery's customer base expanded rapidly after meetings with two companies in Bozeman resulted in sales contracts. Quality Foods Distributing is now delivering Das Kuchenhaus products to grocery and natural food retailers, restaurants, guest ranches, lodges, and foodservice operations in the Northern Rockies region. Delaware North Company, which operates the general stores and gift shops in Yellowstone National Park, placed the Trailblazer bars in their retail outlets—**offering the first ever made-in-Montana snack bar to over 3 million park visitors annually.**

Das Kuchenhaus is a wonderful example of entrepreneurship, innovation, and dedication to creating value-added, locally-made products utilizing local ingredients. **The Zimblemans anticipate hiring two additional staff from the local community** as they ramp up production for their growing distribution networks.